

REMARKS

Applicant has amended the above-identified application in response to the Office Action dated October 13, 2005.

In brief, the Examiner rejected claims 1-13 in the application as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,749,624, issued to Yoshida. In response, Applicant has further amended each of independent claims 1 and 13 to more clearly distinguish the present invention over the prior art references, and namely the Yoshida, U.S. Patent No. 5,749,624, reference.

Specifically, Yoshida teaches a reclining device for a seat incorporating first and second side reclining mechanisms interconnected by a connecting rod. Of note, a pair of disc portions (termed arm plates 8 and 10) sandwich therebetween a rotatable cam member 16, this in turn selected actuating outwardly a pair of inner pieces 20, each with external teeth 21, into serrated contact with rows of teeth defined in inwardly circumferential fashion around the arm plates and in order to selected lock the seat back in position relative to the seat bottom.

In response, Applicant has amended each of independent claims 1 and 13 of the present invention to clarify that the elongated pawl includes a generally elongated body having a first end hingedly secured to the seat bottom frame. Furthermore, the pawl according to the present invention defines an enclosed inner wall configuration, encircling the cam element, and by which the cam element is rotated to selectively pivot the pawl about its remote hinged connection.

This is in clear contrast to Yoshida, in which the sliding pieces are not mounted, hingedly or otherwise, but are rather free floating between disc portions and selectively outwardly actuated by the rotatably mounted cam element. As such, the sliding pieces in Yoshida are not hingedly mounted and, furthermore, each do not independently define an enclosed inner wall configuration (see as best shown in Fig. 2 of the present application illustration and in

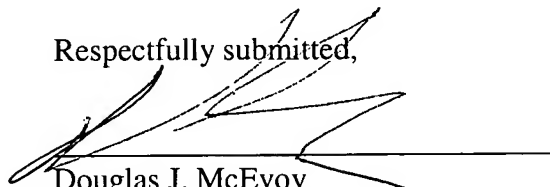
comparison to the illustration set forth in Fig. 1 of Yoshida by which the mating profiles 34 defined in the opposing sliding pieces collectively define the inner wall configuration within which resides the rotatable cam).

Accordingly, the present invention structurally as well as operationally differentiates from the design of Yoshida and would further not be considered to be obvious in view thereof. The configuration and structure of the single pawl element, as recited in each of amended independent claims 1 and 13, further enables a durable and high strength seatback recliner mechanism over and above that possible with the sliding inner piece construction of Yoshida.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 1-13, by virtue of the amendments entered into independent claims 1 and 13, are allowable and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Attorney for Applicant may be contacted at (248) 647-6000 with any questions the Examiner may have.

Respectfully submitted,



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